

visited the park—a traffic which established this park as the most popular in America. Of this number, 397,462 entered the park from the North Carolina side, evidencing greater or lesser travel through North Carolina. There are no figures to show how many who used the western entrance came into our Blue Ridge country, but it must have been a substantial number.

There is evidence that this tremendous increase in tourist traffic was shared at least in part by other sections of the state. From 1927 to 1941, visitors registering in Pisgah National Forest increased 600 per cent, and visitors to Nantahala National Park increased 280 per cent. If you do not care for statistics, you have only to call upon your own experience in trying to find accommodations in resort areas in the last few years.

Perhaps one reason the average citizen is unaware of the magnitude of this business is its wide dispersal. This in itself is a great virtue, because the travel dollar finds its way into the pockets of many diverse groups and benefits many people. Not only the hotel man and the bus and railway companies, but also the filling station operator, the tourist home owner, the retailer, the farmer who supplies food for the visitor, and the many service industries all benefit from this business.

It is difficult for people in the agricultural regions of North Carolina to visualize the economic value of the travel industry, but the people of Buncombe, Henderson, Moore, New Hanover, Dare and many other counties see it easily enough. Bad weather or a scare epidemic or some other impediment to the flow of tourists to those and other counties is equivalent to a disastrous drought in a county like Johnston.

Actually, the industry reaches into Johnston and Cumberland, too, though in a less spectacular way. The money which travelers bring into North Carolina is, of course, taxed, and the revenue from this source builds roads and schools for our children and performs other governmental services throughout the state.

From 1937 to 1941 gasoline consumption in all the American states increased 14.6 per cent. In North Carolina, in the same period, revenue from gasoline taxes increased 39.8 per cent.

It is fairly reasonable to assume that a considerable proportion of this abnormal increase in North Carolina came from sales to out-of-state visitors. The difference amounts to some six million dollars per year in gasoline revenue to the state treasury, and from this figure alone we might surmise how large a stake North Carolinians everywhere have in the travel industry. We